

Coins

Anthony dollar set for a sure go-ahead

By Roger Boye

THE PROPOSED Susan B. Anthony dollar coin should pass a big test in Congress tomorrow with flying colors.

The House Banking Committee is expected to approve — and with votes to spare — a bill authorizing a small-sized dollar coin that would bear the likeness of the 19th-Century crusader for women's rights. Last month, a House Banking subcommittee voted 6 to 1 in favor of the bill.

Meanwhile, the Anthony coin proposal was endorsed unanimously by the Senate Banking Committee during a half-hour session Aug. 1, and that proposal now awaits action by the full Senate. If both houses of Congress approve the proposal before late autumn, as expected, the Anthony dollar should enter circulation in 1979.

The government would save millions of dollars annually if a new dollar coin were used widely, because fewer \$1 bills would be printed. Although a dollar coin would cost nearly twice as much as a dollar bill to make, the coin would last 10 times longer.

A dollar bill wears out in 18 months, but a coin usually circulates for at least 15 years.

The Bureau of the Mint currently produces an Eisenhower dollar that is rarely seen in circulation, presumably because the coin is too heavy (it weighs as much as four quarters) and

too large. The proposed small dollar, which would replace the Ike dollars, would be only 50 per cent heavier and just slightly larger than a quarter.

Of course, many coin collectors, bankers, and grocers remain skeptical that a small dollar coin would be used by the public. For example, the executive director of a national retail grocers association is among the persons who want the Anthony bill killed.

Many coin collectors also object to having Anthony's portrait on the coin. The symbolic Liberty design, originally proposed for the coin by the Treasury Department, is the overwhelming choice of coin collectors, according to a poll conducted by Coin World. Anthony even ranks behind the Statue of Liberty as the most popular dollar coin design among collectors.

Nevertheless, the Treasury Department has all but given up on Miss Liberty. And although the bill before the House Banking Committee does approve use of the soaring eagle design proposed by Treasury for the dollar coin's reverse side, the Senate bill requires that the Apollo eagle design used on the Eisenhower dollar also be placed on the small dollar.

No matter what the design, the circular new coin is expected to have an 11-sided, raised inside rim, so even the blind easily will be able to distinguish it from a quarter.